

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

January 27, 1997 LB 78, 122

SPEAKER WITHEM: LB 122 advances. Mr. Clerk, LB 78.

CLERK: LB 78, introduced by Senator Stuhr. (Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 9, referred to the Natural Resources Committee, advanced to General File. I have no amendments to the bill, Mr. President.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Stuhr, you're recognized to open on your bill.

SENATOR STUHR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and members of the body. LB 78 proposes to simplify the procedures for the disbursement of any remaining funds that ground water conservation districts may have. These ground water districts, under the provisions of LB 36, were passed in 1993, and the ground water districts are to be dissolved by the end of March of this year. This bill proposes that any funds on hand or collected shall be credited to the General Fund of the county in which the main office is located. Current law states that if a district is dissolved, the funds on hand or to be collected shall be distributed to the taxpayers of the district on the same basis as collected. This would involve a court proceeding with the directors of the dissolved ground water district petitioning, a district judge to determine how the funds are to be distributed, which could lead to a very lengthy and costly process. Much of the money would probably go to pay legal fees, court costs, and fees paid to a referee to calculate the amount of the distribution. I believe the current procedure for handling this remaining money is not only unpredictable and costly, but also does not maximize the fullest benefit to the taxpayer. The cost of preparing checks and mailing them to taxpayers could actually exceed the amount that they receive. I was contacted on behalf of the Blue River Association of Ground Water Conservation Districts, which include York, Seward, Hamilton, and Fillmore Counties. All of these districts are to be dissolved by the end of March, and I also might point out that the boundaries of ground water districts generally follow county lines. In closing, LB 78 proposes to eliminate the cumbersome process and replace it with a simple process. That of placing any remaining funds of ground water conservation districts to the county treasurer of the county in which the main office is located, and then credited to